

SUPPORT HB2053

Accessory Dwelling Units
Delegate Samirah

Reasons to Support HB2053:

Virginia is facing significant challenges in housing affordability. Accessory dwelling units (ADUs) which include backyard cottages, basement apartments, or an apartment in an addition to the main home, offer one tool for providing more diverse, flexible, and affordable housing option. ADUs have many benefits including:

- Providing a home for an aging parent where they can be cared for by family members, which is of increased interest given the health challenges in nursing homes.
- Providing a home for a returning college graduate starting out, or a member of the community looking for a more affordable place to live.
- Providing a stream of income to allow a family to afford their home or a retiree to supplement their income.

The information gathered in this study will help local governments to develop and improve their ADU ordinances and address growing housing needs.

Overview:

This state study will bring together stakeholders – experts, community advocated, and government representatives to assess the status and number of ADUs in the state, obstacles to creation of ADUs, and recommended policies for local jurisdictions.

Indicative of the opportunity in Virginia, one mid-size U.S. city is producing 500 ADUs per year, making a substantial contribution to the housing supply. These are homes being produced by individual homeowners and meet a critical need including a place for an aging parent to live or a place for an older couple to downsize while turning over their main home to their children and grandchildren. They can provide a home for a single person or young couple starting out, and a stream of income for a family to help pay the mortgage, or for a retiree on a fixed-income or a lower-income homeowner.

Richmond and Norfolk and other communities have long had accessory units, but most are grandfathered from an earlier era, and often regulations restrict the production of new ADUs. Richmond's new master plan proposes to adopt a new ADU policy and Alexandria is among the jurisdictions currently studying ADUs.